

Listing of Claims:

1. (currently amended) In a telecommunications network, a method for providing a network-based notification service to a calling party during processing of a telephone call of a the calling party to a called party, comprising the steps of:

storing in a database in the telecommunications network calling plan information for subscribers including calling plan information associated with the originating address of the calling party;

receiving a request for a communications connection from an originating address of the calling party to a terminating address of the called party;

verifying that the originating address of the calling party is to receive the notification service for the received request;

retrieving the stored calling plan information for associated with the originating address of the calling party;

determining a minimum cost period which is at least one of a time of day, a day of a week, and a plurality of days for completing the communications connection based on the calling plan information for the originating address; and

while the communications connection is being established within the telecommunications network and before completing the connection of the calling party to the called party, transmitting from the telecommunications network to the calling party an audible notification message including the minimum cost period to the calling party from the telecommunications network;

prompting the calling party to abandon the telephone call after transmitting the minimum cost period;

completing the connection of the calling party to the called party if the telephone call is not abandoned by the calling party; and

deactivating the transmission of the notification message after receiving a deactivation request.

2. (original) The method of claim 1, further comprising the step of prompting the calling party for transfer to a customer service center.

3. (cancelled)

4. (cancelled)

5. (original) The method of claim 1, wherein the step of transmitting further comprises the step of displaying the notification message on a display screen.

6. (cancelled)

7. (original) The method of claim 1, further comprising the step of displaying the minimum cost period on a web page.

8. (cancelled)

9. (original) The method of claim 1, further comprising the step of deactivating the transmission of the notification message after a predetermined period of time.

10. (original) The method of claim 1, further comprising the step of providing a plurality of minimum cost periods to the calling party, after the calling party has made a plurality of telephone calls.

11. (cancelled)

12. (cancelled)

13. (currently amended) A method within a telecommunication network of providing a service for notifying a calling party of a minimum cost period for completing

a telephone call, wherein the minimum cost period is at least one of a time of day, a day of week, and a plurality of sequential days, comprising the steps of:

storing in a database in the telecommunications network billing rate data associated with the network address of the calling party;

receiving a network address corresponding to a telecommunications device that initiated the telephone call;

verifying that the network address of the telecommunications device is to be notified of the minimum cost period;

receiving billing rate data for the network address from the network database;

determining the minimum cost period for completing the telephone call based on the billing rate data for the network address during set-up of the telephone call; and

notifying the calling party of the minimum cost period by audibly announcing the minimum cost period and the ability to terminate the call prior to completing set-up of the telephone call; and

deactivating the step of notifying the party after receiving a deactivation request.

14. (original) The method of claim 13, further comprising the step of prompting the calling party for transfer to a customer service center.

15. (cancelled)

16. (cancelled)

17. (original) The method of claim 13, wherein the step of notifying further comprises the step of displaying the minimum cost period on a display screen.

18. (cancelled)

19. (original) The method of claim 13, further comprising the step of displaying the minimum cost period on a web page.

20. (cancelled)

21. (currently amended) A method within a telecommunication network of providing a network-based service for notifying a calling party of a least-cost calling plan while initiating a long distance telephone call, comprising the steps of:

storing in a database in the telecommunications network information on a plurality of calling plans including calling plans able to be associated with the network address of the calling party;

receiving a telephone network address corresponding to a telecommunications device that initiated the telephone call;

verifying that the telephone number of the telecommunications device is to be notified of the least-cost calling plan;

retrieving the stored calling plan information associated with said telephone network address;

determining the least-cost calling plan for completing the telephone call based on ~~the stored~~ plurality of calling plans for a long distance telephone network designated for routing of the telephone call; and

from the telecommunications network, sending a message audibly notifying the calling party of the least-cost calling plan prior to completing connection of the telephone call; and

prompting the calling party to abandon the telephone call after notification of the least-cost calling plan.

22. (original) The method of claim 21, further comprising the step of prompting the calling party for transfer to a service center.

23. (cancelled)

24. (cancelled)

25. (original) The method of claim 21, wherein the step of notifying further comprises the step of displaying the least-cost calling plan on a display screen.

26. (original) The method of claim 21, further comprising the step of displaying the least-cost calling plan on a web page after the telephone call is completed.

27. (cancelled)

28. (cancelled)

29. (currently amended) In a telecommunication network, a method of providing a network-based service for notifying a calling party, while making a telephone call, of a least-cost calling plan for completing the telephone call, comprising the steps of:

storing in a database in the telecommunications network information on a plurality of calling plans including calling plans able to be associated with the calling party;

receiving a request for a telephony connection from an originating network address of the calling party to a terminating network address;

setting up the telephony connection to the called party, while executing the steps of:

verifying that the originating network address of the telecommunications device is authorized to be notified of the least cost calling plan;

receiving from the database calling plan information of-associated with the originating network address of the calling party;

comparing the calling plan information associated with the calling party to a-the plurality of calling plans stored in the database in the telecommunication network so as to select the least-cost calling plan; and

from the telecommunications network, sending an audible message to the calling party of announcing the selected least-cost calling plan.

30. (original) The method of claim 29, further comprising the step of prompting the calling party for transfer to a service center after receiving the message.

31. (cancelled)

32. (cancelled)

33. (original) The method of claim 29, wherein the step of sending the message further comprises the step of displaying the least-cost calling plan.

34. (original) The method of claim 33, further comprising the step of displaying the least cost calling plan on a web page.

35. (currently amended) In a packetized network for audio telephony, a network-based method for processing a telephone call of a calling party having an originating address to a called party having a terminating address, comprising the steps of:

storing in a database in the packetized network information on a calling plan able to be associated with the originating address of the calling party;

receiving a request for a communications connection from an originating address of the calling party to a terminating address, the request including a quality of service level;

verifying that the originating address of the calling party is authorized to receive the notification message;

retrieving from the database stored calling plan information associated with the originating address;

determining, in the network, a cost value for completing the communications connection based on the calling plan information and the quality of service level in the request; and

transmitting a notification message of the cost value to the calling party from the telecommunications network while the communications connection is being established within the telecommunications network.

36. (cancelled)

37. (original) The method of claim 35, wherein the step of transmitting further comprises the step of audibly announcing the notification message.

38. (original) The method of claim 35, wherein the step of transmitting further comprises the step of displaying the notification message on a screen.

39. (currently amended) In a telecommunications network, a method for providing a network-based notification service to a calling party during processing of a video telephone call of athe calling party to a called party, comprising the steps of:

storing in a database in the telecommunications network calling plan information for subscribers including calling plan information associated with the originating address of the calling party;

receiving a request for a communications connection from an originating address of the calling party to a terminating address of the called party;

verifying that the originating address of the calling party is to receive the notification service for the received request;

retrieving the stored calling plan information ofassociated with the originating address of the calling party;

determining a minimum cost period which is at least one of a time of day, a day of the week, and a plurality of days for completing the communications connection based on the calling plan information for the originating address; and

transmitting a notification message including the minimum cost period for display to the calling party from the telecommunications network, while the communications connection is being established within the telecommunications network and before completing the connection of the calling party to the called party; and

prompting the calling party to abandon the video telephone call after the step of transmitting the message.

40. (original) The method of claim 39, further comprising the step of prompting the calling party for transfer to a customer service center.

41. (cancelled)

42. (original) The method of claim 39, further comprising the step of displaying the minimum cost period on a web page.

43. (currently amended) In a telecommunication network, a method of providing a network-based service for notifying a calling party, while making a video telephone call, of a least-cost calling plan for completing the video telephone call, comprising the steps of:

storing in a database in the telecommunications network information on a plurality of calling plans including calling plans able to be associated with the calling party;

receiving a request for a video telephony connection from an originating network address of the calling party to a terminating network address;

setting up the video telephony connection to the called party, while executing the steps of:

verifying that the originating network address of the telecommunications device is authorized to be notified of the least cost calling plan;

receiving from the database calling plan information of associated with the originating network address of the calling party;

comparing the calling plan information associated with the calling party to a plurality of calling plans stored in the database in the telecommunication network so as to select the least-cost calling plan; and

from the telecommunications network, sending a message to notifying the calling party of the selected least-cost calling plan; and

prompting the calling party to abandon the video telephone call after the step of sending the message.

44. (cancelled)

45. (original) The method of claim 44, further comprising the step of prompting the calling party for transfer to a customer service center.

46. (original) The method of claim 43, wherein the step of sending includes the step of displaying the message.

47. (original) The method of claim 43, wherein the step of sending includes the step of announcing the message.